

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

OVERSIGHT HEARING

“Political Interference with Science: Global Warming II”

**Monday, March 19, 2007; 10:00 a.m.
2154 Rayburn House Office Building**

Minority Memorandum

On Monday, March 19, 2007, the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform (the “Committee”) will hold a hearing entitled “Political Interference with Science: Global Warming II.” This hearing picks up from the January 30, 2007 Committee hearing where witnesses discussed allegations of political interference with climate change science by the Bush Administration. This hearing also takes place in conjunction with the Committee’s investigation into the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)¹ and allegations of editing of scientific reports.

BACKGROUND

For some time President Bush has been criticized for not implementing policies commensurate with increasing reports of potential catastrophic impacts of climate change. President Bush also has been accused of exerting political influence on climate change science amid assertions such as:

- President Bush is a climate change denier
- the Bush Administration has inappropriately edited and added uncertainty to “scientific” reports
- the Bush Administration has silenced and suppressed scientists whose climate change views are contrary to those of President Bush
- the Bush Administration has diverted or cancelled scientific funding as a means of retaliation
- the Bush Administration is not acting sufficiently quickly or decidedly to implement policies (such as cap-and-trade) to address the potential magnitude of the potential impacts of climate change

¹ The Council on Environmental Quality acts as the President’s top environmental advisors.

These accusations have already been made at past hearings and likely will be heard again during the hearing on Monday, March 19, 2007. Further anticipated discussion includes:

Anticipated from the Majority

During this hearing the Majority will present examples of attempts by the Bush Administration to silence scientists and suppress climate science likely including (but not limited to):

- (1) testimony from climate scientist James Hansen who will say NASA officials (among other things) stopped him from talking to the press, edited his documents, and reduced his funding; and,
- (2) evidence of edits to “scientific” documents by non-scientists at the White House.²

Regarding witnesses, the Majority’s witnesses will be featured on Panel One. The Majority refused to include any Minority witnesses on Panel One. The Majority, instead, elected to put the two witnesses requested by Ranking Member Davis on Panel Two and Three to testify alone. This includes Dr. Roy Spencer, a NASA award recipient³ and former NASA scientist, who, during the Clinton Administration, experienced instances similar to what Hansen characterizes as unacceptable political interference.⁴

Additionally, Majority Staff may attempt to impugn Spencer by referring to: (1) Greenpeace reports of his ties to Exxon through TechCentralStation, a think tank supported by Exxon;⁵ and (2) his religiously-based belief in intelligent design.^{6, 7}

² Note: the Majority’s evidence is not expected to include any examples of the Administration altering or denying publication of technical scientific papers.

³ Curriculum vitae of Dr. Roy Spencer, on filed with Committee Staff.

⁴ Roy Spencer, *Global Warming Science, or Policy?*, TECHCENTRALSTATION, Jan 31, 2006, available at <http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=0131061> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

⁵ Factsheet on Roy Spencer on “Exxonsecrets”, a website created by Greenpeace, available at <http://www.exxonsecrets.org/html/personfactsheet.php?id=19> [last visited Mar. 19, 2007].

⁶ Roy Spencer, *Faith-based Evolution*, TECHCENTRALSTATION, Aug. 8, 2005, available at <http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=0808051> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

⁷ Note: Regarding TCS, Spencer likely will respond that, when he was asked to write for TCS, he was not aware it was partially supported by Exxon-Mobil.

Anticipated Minority Responses

First, it is important to note the overlap of science and politics is a fact of every Administration. Further, it seems inappropriate to attack an Administration for setting substantive policies and enforcing procedural policies to ensure those substantive policies are consistently communicated.

It is Minority Staff's preliminary findings that the above evidence does not support the allegations by the Majority. Additionally, because the Majority has not provided any logical reason for consigning Minority Witness Spencer to the Panel Three by himself, this marginalization seems somewhat hypocritical for a hearing on political interference in science.

Further, Minority Staff believes these hearings and the accompanying investigations are being conducted to portray President Bush and his Administration as suppressing and silencing governmental climate scientists and confusing the state of climate change science because of some attempt by Bush to appease special interests.

Minority Staff believes these intentions may in part be borne from a belief by the Majority that, at the end of the Clinton Administration, corporations and the general public were ready to accept relatively drastic measures to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Allegedly, President Bush rolled back such possible developments and that this has somehow been perpetrated through the suppression of science and the muzzling of scientists.

Minority Staff are concerned about the implications for the larger issue of academic freedom on the basis that Staff have been informed that some scientists who do not adopt what is regarded as the consensus view of global warming (that humans are the predominant cause) have experienced:

- (1) difficulties obtaining research grants
- (2) difficulties in publishing in scientific journals; and
- (3) their reputations being challenged publicly in the press, on the internet, by policymakers, and by non-governmental activist groups through false allegations and innuendo.

WITNESSES

PANEL ONE

Dr. James Hansen

Hansen is head of the NASA Institute for Space Studies (in New York City), a division of the Goddard Space Flight Center. He is also an adjunct professor at Columbia University. He is considered a leading expert on climate change science.

It has been reported Hansen has gone around NASA media policies,⁸ and Hansen himself openly acknowledges doing so.⁹ Hansen has alleged political interference and silencing regarding his global warming message on a number of occasions before.¹⁰

At this time, Minority staff can point to only two concrete instances of what Hansen characterizes as unacceptable political interference:

- **May 8, 1989** – Hansen alleged censorship when OMB instructed Hansen to add a statement to his Senate testimony relating that his conclusions should be viewed as estimates from evolving computer models and not as reliable predictions.¹¹

⁸ Marc Morano, *Media Darling on 'Global Warming' Assailed by Colleagues*, CYBERCAST NEWS SERVICE, Apr. 17, 2006, available at <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewSpecialReports.asp?Page=/SpecialReports/archive/200604/SPE20060417a.html> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007]; Point Paper by George Deutsch, while NASA Public Affairs Officer Dec. 15, 2005, available at, <http://www.cnsnews.com/PDF/2006/MoranoDeutschHansenMemo.pdf> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

⁹ Jim Hansen, *Climate change: On the Edge*, INDEP. (UK), Feb 17, 2007 (Hansen: “Yet, a few weeks ago, when I – a NASA climate scientists – tried to talk to the media about these issues following a lecture I had given calling for prompt reductions in the emissions of greenhouse gases, the Nasa public affairs team – staffed by political appointees from the Bush administration – tried to stop me doing so. I was not happy with that, and I ignored the restrictions.”) (emphasis added).

¹⁰ James Hansen, *Swift Boating, Stealth Budgeting, and Unitary Executives*, 19 WORLD WATCH 26, 31 (2006) (referring to the reduction of the NASA Earth Science Budget 2006).

¹¹ Bob Davis, *NASA Aide Says White House Made Him Dilute testimony on Greenhouse Effect*, WALL ST. J., May 9, 1989; *Hearing on Climate Surprises before the Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation*, 101st Cong. S. Hrg 101-126 (May 8, 1989) (statements of Sen. Al Gore, Jr., and Dr. James Hansen, NASA). Note: At the behest of OMB, Hansen adds a sentence that his conclusions “should be viewed as estimates from evolving computer models and not as reliable predictions.” In colloquy with Sen. Gore, Hansen alleges censorship by the Bush (I) Administration (OMB):

Gore: “You respond by saying, among other things, that as the models improve and more evidence becomes available, it is not very likely that scientists will change their conclusion that increased in greenhouse gases will intensify drought in the middle and low latitude land areas, like the Midwest of the United States.

I am puzzled that you also say that on that same point on page 4 of your statement that you want to stress that you do not really believe that and that as the computer models evolved, that conclusion will very likely evolve and should not be regarded as reliable.

- **Jan. 2006** – Hansen alleged censorship when a NASA political appointee denied an interview with Hansen.¹²

Hansen has commented extensively on the climate changes policies¹³ and is a vocal critic of the Bush Administration's climate change policies.¹⁴

In Oct. 2001, Hansen received an unrestricted cash prize of \$250,000 from the Heinz Foundation.¹⁵ In 2004, Hansen publicly endorsed Presidential candidate John Kerry.¹⁶

Hansen was asked by Al Gore to review his slideshow which became the movie “An Inconvenient Truth” and did so.¹⁷

I think I know the answer to the question I am about to ask you, but why do you directly contradict yourself in the testimony you are giving about this scientific questions?

Hansen: The last paragraph in that section which seems to be in contradiction that that was not a paragraph which I wrote. It was added to my testimony in the process of review by OMB, and I did object to the addition of that paragraph because in essence it says that I believe that all of the scientific conclusions that I just discussed are not reliable, and I certainly do not agree with that.

¹² See Deutsch below.

¹³ See generally James Hansen, *Swift Boating, Stealth Budgeting, and Unitary Executives*, 19 WORLD WATCH 26, 31 (2006); Statements by James Hansen, NASA scientists, on Newsmakers program at the National Press Club, Feb 26, 2007, available at <http://inside.c-spanarchives.org:8080/cspan/cspan.csp?command=dprogram&record=550895345> [last visited Mar. 15, 2007].

¹⁴ Andrew C. Revkin, *NASA Expert Criticizes Bush on Global Warming Policy*, NY TIMES, Oct. 26, 2004, A22, stating “Dr. Hansen, 63, acknowledged that he imperiled his credibility and perhaps his job by criticizing Mr. Bush's policies in the final days of a tight presidential campaign. He said he decided to speak out after months of deliberation because he was convinced the country needed to change course on climate policy;” and “In a draft of the talk, a copy of which Dr. Hansen provided to The Times yesterday, he wrote that President Bush's climate policy, which puts off consideration of binding cuts in such emissions until 2012, was likely to be too little too late.” See also Statements by James Hansen, NASA scientists, on Newsmakers program at the National Press Club, Feb 26, 2007, available at <http://inside.c-spanarchives.org:8080/cspan/cspan.csp?command=dprogram&record=550895345> [last visited Mar. 15, 2007].

¹⁵ George James, *Briefing: Science; Prize Winner*, NY TIMES, Feb 11, 2001, available at <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9905E5D61531F932A25751C0A9679C8B63&sec=&spon=&pagewanted=print> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007]. See also The Heinz Awards, James Hansen 7th Annual Heinz Award Recipient, available at <http://www.heinzawards.net/recipients.asp?action=detail&recipientID=9> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007]; About the Heinz Award, available at <http://www.heinzawards.net/about.asp> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

¹⁶ See Andrew C. Revkin, *NASA Expert Criticizes Bush on Global Warming Policy*, NY TIMES, Oct. 26, 2004, A22 (stating “In the talk, Dr. Hansen, who describes himself as ‘moderately conservative, middle-of-the-road’ and registered in Pennsylvania as an independent, plans to say that he will vote for Senator John Kerry, while also criticizing some of Mr. Kerry's positions, particularly his pledge to keep nuclear waste out of Nevada.”); Chuck Schoffner, *NASA Scientist: Bush Stifles Global Warming Evidence*, AP Oct. 27 (stating “He described himself as moderately conservative, but said he will vote for John Kerry in the presidential election.”).

¹⁷ James Hansen, *Statement of Political Inclinations*, Feb. 2006, available at <http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/polinclin.pdf> [last visited Mar. 15, 2007].

Mr. Phil Cooney

From 2001 – June 2005 Cooney served as the first Chief of Staff for CEQ. Prior to this, Cooney spent 13 years as a counsel and lobbyist with the American Petroleum Institute (API) and the team leader for API's climate change initiatives. During that time, API led an initiative to fight a petition to EPA to regulate carbon dioxide as a pollutant.¹⁸

The allegations against Cooney are that he, a lawyer, inappropriately edited so-called scientific documents and “watered down” the science¹⁹

The documents obtained in the course of the Committee's investigation and reviewed thus far by Minority Staff include notations by Cooney. Minority Staff have made the following preliminary assessments:

- It is Minority Staff's understanding these documents in fact are policy documents and not scientific documents,²⁰ thus, allegations by the press as well as by the Majority that the White House was editing scientific documents appear inaccurate.
- It is Minority Staff's understanding Cooney made notations on these documents with the purpose of ensuring policy documents being produced by the Administration were consistent with:
 - o (1) the President's climate change policies announced Jun. 11, 2001,²¹ and Feb. 14, 2002;²² and,
 - o (2) the National Academy of Sciences' 2001 report which was the most comprehensive and current statement of scientific understanding of climate change available.^{23, 24}

¹⁸ This information is contained in documents from the American Petroleum Institute (API). On file with Committee Staff.

¹⁹ See Piltz testimony, Piltz NY articles, Waxman's statements at the last hearing, etc.

²⁰ The documents on which Cooney has made notations that the Committee has received include Our Changing Planet (OCP), which is prepared by the Climate Change Science Program (CCSP) and the Subcommittee on Global Change Research. It is transmitted by the Chairman of the CCCTI to Congress with the President's annual budget request and describes the activities and plans of the CCSP; the Draft Report on the Environment (ROE) which is published by EPA using available indicators and data to answer questions pertaining to national environmental and human health conditions; the US Climate Change Science Program Strategic Plan (CCSP SP) / Vision & Highlights (CCSP V&H) is produced CCSP and Subcommittee on Global Change Research and was transmitted to Congress by the Chair, Vice Chair, and Exec Director of CCSTI."

²¹ White House, *Climate Change Initial Report*, Jun. 11, 2001, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/06/climatechange.pdf> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

²² White House, *Global Climate Change Policy Book*, Feb. 14, 2002, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/02/climatechange.html> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

²³ National Academy of Sciences, *Climate Change Science: An Analysis of Some Key Questions (2001)*, National Academies Press, Jun. 2001.

²⁴ Committee Staff phone interviews.

- It is Minority Staff's understanding CEQ had neither the final say nor any say greater to that of any other agency involved in the OMB interagency review process when reviewing and commenting on documents.²⁵

Mr. George Deutsch

At the age of 20, Deutsch left Texas A&M in his final year to work on the Bush 2004 campaign. After the 2004 Presidential election, Deutsch applied for a job with the White House and was appointed to a job at NASA in 2005. For the first six months, Deutsch served as an editor at NASA and was promoted into the Public Affairs Office in Washington, D.C.

Deutsch drew media attention because of allegations he inappropriately interfered with federal climate change science, namely:

- **Allegation 1:** He "denied" a request from NPR to interview Hansen. In fact, NASA allowed superiors to take interviews if they chose which Staff understood happened here. Further, Hansen was interviewed by NPR several days later.²⁶
- **Allegation 2:** Deutsch instructed the NASA web editor to include "theory" after "Big Bang" citing religious reasons. In fact, the actual reason he gave to the web editor was that "Big Bang Theory" is correct AP style. Apparently the religious discussion was extraneous and to an individual whom he considered "like-minded."²⁷
- **Allegation 3:** Deutsch lied on his resume on file at NASA because it says he had graduated but he actually had not yet. Deutsch, indeed, had not yet graduated from Texas A&M as his resume said he had. It was reported Deutsch had one three-hour class to take before he graduated, and he did walk during graduation with his class.²⁸

Deutsch resigned from NASA in early Feb 2006.²⁹

²⁵ Committee Staff phone interviews.

²⁶ Marc Morano, *Media Darling on 'Global Warming' Assailed by Colleagues*, CYBERCAST NEWS SERVICE, Apr. 17, 2006, available at <http://www.cnsnews.com/ViewSpecialReports.asp?Page=/SpecialReports/archive/200604/SPE20060417a.html> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ *Id.*

PANEL TWO

James Connaughton.

Connaughton has been Chairman of the President's Council on Environmental Quality since 2001.

Connaughton is expected to defend Cooney stating Cooney was making policy documents consistent with the President's policies and the National Academy of Sciences' 2001 report.

The Majority is expected to question Connaughton on Questions for the Record they submitted to him after the July 20, 2006 hearing to which CEQ has not yet responded.

PANEL THREE

Dr. Roy Spencer.

Spencer is a principal research scientist at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He is known for his satellite-based temperature monitoring work. Spencer received NASA's Medal for Exceptional Scientific Achievement and the American Meteorological Society's Special Award. Spencer served as Senior Scientist for Climate Studies at NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center (during the Clinton and Bush II Administrations).

Spencer has been labeled a "skeptic" because he has been skeptical of the alleged scientific consensus that global warming is predominantly caused by human activity. Additionally, Spencer is an Evangelical Christian and published a column on intelligent design.³⁰

Spencer is expected to testify that during his time at NASA during the Clinton Administration, NASA officials were aware of his position regarding climate change and that he was always reminded that he was not allowed to speak regarding policy matters.³¹

It is Minority's understanding some have attempted to impugn Spencer's credibility by:

- referring to him as "fringe" and not a "mainstream" scientist; and
- referring to his religious beliefs, namely his belief in and writings on intelligent design.

³⁰ Roy Spencer, Faith-based Evolution, TECHCENTRALSTATION, Aug. 8, 2005, *available at* <http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=080805I> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

³¹ Roy Spencer, *Global Warming Science, or Policy?*, TECHCENTRALSTATION, Jan 31, 2006, *available at* <http://www.tcsdaily.com/article.aspx?id=013106I> [last visited Mar. 16, 2007].

Further, some have singled out Spencer as having “affiliate[ions] with several industry-funded think tanks that questions the science behind global warming.”³²

Minority Committee Staff can be reached at (202) 225 5074 with any questions.

³² Lauren Morello, *Lead players in censorship claims to appear in House hearing*, E&E DAILY, Mar. 16, 2007.